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General and complete disarmament

Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures; assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them; and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by Member States, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations regarding the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 67/50, 68/34 and 68/48, which cover the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the assistance to States provided in that context and the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures.

The reporting period, from August 2013 to July 2014, was positively characterized by the successful outcome of the fifth biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and by the adoption of the first Security Council resolution on small arms.

* A/69/50.



I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 67/50, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its sixty-ninth session, a report on the implementation of practical disarmament measures, taking into consideration the activities of the Group of States Interested in Practical Disarmament Measures in this regard.
2. By its resolution 68/34, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General and those States and organizations that are in a position to do so, to continue to provide assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to continue to consider the matter and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.
3. By its resolution 68/48, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", the General Assembly called upon all Member States to contribute to the continued implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (Programme of Action) at the national, regional and global levels. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session on the implementation of the resolution.
4. The present report is submitted pursuant to the requests made by the General Assembly in the above-mentioned resolutions. To enable a coherent approach to be taken to those overlapping and interconnected issues, the three resolutions are addressed together in the present report.

II. Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures; assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them; and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

A. United Nations system

1. Security Council

5. On 26 September 2013, under the presidency of Australia, the Security Council held an open debate on the issue of small arms and considered the biennial report of the Secretary-General to the Council on the same issue (S/2013/503). The Council then adopted resolution 2117 (2013), its first resolution on small arms and light weapons.
6. In resolution 2117 (2013), the Security Council highlighted the need for Member States, international and regional and subregional organizations to share with panels of experts relevant information related to the arms embargoes mandated by the Council; the strengthening of the role of peacekeeping missions to support the work of panels of experts and host Governments in implementing weapons collection, stockpile management, record-keeping and weapons-tracing measures; and the reaffirmation of the intention of the Council to take appropriate measures,

when needed, to strengthen the mechanisms for monitoring arms embargoes, including through assigning dedicated staff or monitoring units to relevant United Nations missions to monitor arms embargoes effectively.

7. In resolution 2117 (2013), the Council reiterated the linkages between the illicit transfer, the destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on the one hand and international humanitarian and human rights law and the protection of civilians on the other. It also highlighted the need for the full implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument) and urged States to consider signing and ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible.

2. General Assembly

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and outcome of the fifth biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

8. The fifth biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons was convened from 16 to 20 June 2014 in New York. The meeting, which was chaired by Zahir Tanin, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, concluded successfully with the adoption, by consensus, of a final report to which a substantive outcome document was annexed.

9. Sixty-eight States had submitted a national report on their implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

10. The agenda of the meeting included the following substantive items: stockpile management, including physical security measures; implementation of the International Tracing Instrument; and international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building, training and the transfer of technology and equipment. States also discussed the follow-up to the second Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action and agreed on a recommendation on topics to be considered at the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts in 2015.

11. The Meeting considered a report by the Secretary-General on recent developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons and their implications for the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1). The report covered various developments, such as key new trends in the manufacture and design of small arms and light weapons, including modular weapons that can be fitted with different components and even change their calibre and the printing of weapons using three-dimensional printers. New technologies that could potentially enhance the marking, record-keeping and tracing of weapons, such as biometric or radio frequency identification technology, were also highlighted. Additionally, the report contained suggestions for the uptake of these new technologies, including in the context of international cooperation and assistance. In this regard, it was stressed in the report that, to be

effective, technology transfers needed to be embedded in wider plans for training, compatibility, maintenance and regional harmonization.

12. Following constructive discussions during the Meeting, States agreed to undertake several measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The most prominent of those measures were:

(a) To take advantage of technological advances to strengthen stockpile management, noting the importance of the transfer of related technology;

(b) To consider further developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument;

(c) To urge States and international and regional and subregional organizations in a position to do so to render cooperation and assistance and the transfer of technology and equipment, in line with the needs and priorities of recipient States;

(d) To consider options for developing a comprehensive international assistance framework to provide resources, training, capacity-building and technical assistance to developing countries, to support the effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/WP.1/Rev.1, paras. 19, 39, 44 and 58).

Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Firearms Protocol)

13. During the reporting period, the number of States parties to the Firearms Protocol increased to 109. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continued to provide legislative assistance and technical support in strengthening firearms control regimes, in building capacity to investigate and prosecute firearms trafficking and related crimes and in promoting regional and international cooperation. UNODC provided tailored legislative assistance and advice to Benin, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. A comprehensive training curriculum on firearms in modular form is under development.

14. UNODC delivered specialized training courses on investigating firearms trafficking to practitioners in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ghana and Senegal and held a regional seminar for the countries of West Africa and the Sahel region to promote legislative harmonization and support the implementation of the international and regional instruments on firearms. Moreover, in coordination with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, UNODC began a process of providing technical assistance for marking firearms through the procurement of marking machines and delivery of training to national authorities in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Senegal. In cooperation with other partners, UNODC also initiated the development of software for registering seized firearms, which States can use to record and analyse data relating to the seizure of firearms.

15. UNODC presented to the second meeting of the Working Group on Firearms, which was held in Vienna from 26 to 28 May 2014 the preliminary findings from its global study on firearms trafficking, which focused on the transnational routes and modus operandi of firearms trafficking, its links to other cross-border trafficking flows and possible connections to organized crime and terrorism.

16. The working group encouraged States parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to develop or strengthen coordination among relevant and competent national authorities, with a view to enhancing capacities for statistics and data collection, analysis and information sharing related to illicit firearms trafficking.

Broader initiatives related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

Arms Trade Treaty

17. On 3 June 2013, the Arms Trade Treaty was opened for signature in New York. Since then, 118 States have signed the treaty, which is a legally binding instrument that sets common international standards for the regulation of the global arms trade, including small arms and light weapons.

18. The Treaty contains a number of provisions that supplement or complement existing global instruments to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, such as the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. The Treaty not only includes small arms and light weapons in its scope, but also covers their ammunition.

19. States parties to the Treaty are required to take measures to regulate exports of parts and components, transit and trans-shipment, and arms brokering — all highly relevant in the context of small arms control. Another provision of the Treaty that is of particular relevance to efforts to curb the flows of small arms and light weapons into the illicit market is that each State party involved in the transfer of conventional arms must take measures to prevent their diversion. To this effect, the provision of international assistance to help States parties build their capabilities in stockpile management is also encouraged in the Treaty.

20. It is also noteworthy that States parties to the Treaty are required to report on their annual authorized or actual exports and imports of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. That is a step forward vis-à-vis the Register of Conventional Arms, which does not include small arms and light weapons as one of its main categories.

United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation

21. An increasing number of Governments recognize the need for focused and effective funding to support conventional arms regulation. In response to these requests, in June 2013 the United Nations launched the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation as a multi-donor, flexible funding mechanism.

22. The Trust Facility is designed to fund projects aimed at supporting the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action. It aims to improve the effectiveness of assistance through better coordination, monitoring and

matching of resources and to promote increased sustainability through more predictable sources of funding.

23. The Trust Facility issues an annual call for proposals and invites the partners of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and research institutes to submit project proposals. As a result of the call for proposals in 2013, eight projects were funded that aimed to support Member States in their efforts to implement the Programme of Action, sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty and understand better the complementarities between the Treaty and the Programme of Action.

24. The Trust Facility also provides for the possibility of funding special circumstances projects to address emergency situations requiring a rapid response. Proposals for such projects can be submitted all year around. In 2013, it funded one special circumstances project in the Philippines to help clean up and secure ammunition that was scattered over a large area following the destruction of an ammunition depot by Typhoon Haiyan.

Armed violence and development

25. During the reporting period, the Office for Disarmament Affairs published an occasional paper on how to establish and maintain gun-free zones. Although such zones may be known by different names in different places, the concept is the same: geographically limited spaces — in addition to those areas where most national legislation already creates a gun-free environment, such as courthouses or airports — where local regulations prohibit the carrying or possession of guns by civilians in order to reduce armed violence and promote public safety. Providing comprehensive information on how to establish and maintain a gun-free zone will assist national Governments, local authorities and international development and peacebuilding organizations in their efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence.¹

United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

26. Since its establishment in 1992, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has been a primary instrument for transparency as regards the international trade in conventional heavy weapons. Since 2003, Member States have also been able to report voluntarily on international transfers of small arms and light weapons as part of their background information. The Register has developed a standard reporting template for this purpose, which breaks down small arms and light weapons into 13 subcategories.

27. To date, 80 Member States have reported on their exports and imports of small arms and light weapons to the Register, or the absence of such transfers, at least once. Although not within the scope of the Register, some States have also reported on national holdings of weapons, their procurement through domestic production and permits/authorizations for export, in addition to actual transfers, and on transfers of ammunition. In recent years, over 50 per cent of the States which submit reports to the Register have included information on transfers of small arms and light weapons.

¹ See *The Gun-Free Zone: A Tool to Prevent and Reduce Armed Violence* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.IX.6), available from www.un.org/disarmament/publications/occasionalpapers.

United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms

28. The United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism was established in 1998 to formulate and implement a multidisciplinary and coordinated approach to the problem of illicit small arms within the United Nations system.

29. In the course of the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty, the Secretary-General requested the mechanism to undertake an inter-agency study on the adverse effects of unregulated arms transfers on States and citizens and their impact on the work of the United Nations, which was published in March 2013.²

30. Notably, partners in the mechanism were fully involved in the process of preparing for the fifth biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action and delivered a joint statement underlining its central role in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system on issues related to small arms and light weapons. That is a topic of relevance for areas as diverse as peacekeeping, gender, public health, human rights, disarmament, international trade and development.

International Small Arms Control Standards

31. The International Small Arms Control Standards launched by the United Nations in 2012 provide practical guidance on putting in place effective controls over the full life cycle of small arms and light weapons, based on commitments that Member States have made in relevant global instruments. The Standards ensure that, no matter which part of the United Nations a Member State approaches with a request for support related to small arms and light weapons control, the support and advice provided to the Member State would be consistent.

32. Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) encourages the application of the Standards to guide effective physical security and stockpile management practices.

33. During the reporting period, partners in the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism have continued to use the Standards to good effect in assisting Member States to strengthen national controls over small arms and light weapons. The following examples indicate some of the different ways in which United Nations entities have used the Standards:

(a) The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, together with the Mine Action Service, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have drawn heavily on the Standards to advise and support the Government of Somalia on stockpile management, including physical security measures and marking and record-keeping of small arms and light weapons imported under the partially lifted arms embargo;

(b) The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa have used the Standards to help elaborate an integrated strategy to counter terrorism and arms trafficking in Central Africa;

² *The Impact of Poorly Regulated Arms Transfers on the Work of the United Nations* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.IX.5), available from www.un.org/disarmament/publications/occasionalpapers.

(c) The United Nations Development Group, which brings together the 32 United Nations entities that play a role in development, has committed to applying the Standards in the support it provides to national partners in the area of small arms control;

(d) The Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean has used the Standards to develop specific training curricula and manuals and standard operating procedures on general small arms control, as well as on marking, stockpile management and destruction for use across the region. In Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa has made use of the Standards to train border control forces in Côte d'Ivoire on small arms control and develop national standards on stockpile management;

(e) With support from UNDP, seven cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina have used the Standards to design and carry out a weapons collection and destruction campaign. In Kosovo, also with the support of UNDP, over 1,300 small arms and light weapons were destroyed in accordance with the Standards;

(f) The Standards have also been used beyond the United Nations system. International training institutes, such as the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana and the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya, have begun integrating the Standards into their training curricula on small arms and light weapons. The Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group has integrated the Standards and the accompanying assessment tool into its small arms training course and will use the assessment tool described below when conducting staff assessment visits to storage sites.

34. During the fifth biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action, the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism launched additional modules of the Standards, which provide practical guidance on legislative and regulatory aspects of small arms and light weapons control, including national controls over manufacture, international transfer (reflecting the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty) and end user and end use of internationally transferred weapons, as well as putting in place national coordinating mechanisms to strengthen small arms control.

35. To support the global application of the Standards, UNIDIR has developed a software assessment tool (the ISACS assessment tool) designed to facilitate use of the Standards and, in particular, to allow users including the United Nations, States, regional organizations and civil society organizations to assess how their policies, programmes and practices regarding small arms and light weapons control align with international standards.

36. During the reporting period, that software has been released globally and made available to interested users free of charge. It has supported the practical application of the Standards, in particular on stockpile management, marking and record-keeping and weapons collection and destruction, in several States representing a range of capacity and geographic locations. UNIDIR has begun a process of organizing regional capacity-building workshops on the Standards and the software tool, so as to establish a global network of organizations trained in the use of the software, which will serve as force multipliers in assisting a wider range of

interested users to integrate the Standards into their national small arms and light weapons control policies, programmes and practices.

International ammunition technical guidelines

37. Poorly stored ammunition stockpiles can become unstable and explode, posing significant safety risks. Since the late 1980s, 466 unintended explosions of munitions stockpiles have been recorded and have affected around 90 countries. Thousands of people have died and the livelihoods of entire communities have been disrupted. The number of such explosions is likely to increase if adequate preventive measures are not taken.

38. Unsecured or poorly monitored national ammunition stockpiles have also led to massive diversion into illicit markets, fuelling crime and conflict. In addition, ammunition pilfered from stockpiles is increasingly used to assemble improvised explosive devices.

39. In resolution 63/61, the General Assembly welcomed the report of the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to resolution 61/72 (A/63/182) and strongly encouraged States to implement its recommendations. The completion of the guidelines and the establishment of the UN SaferGuard programme for the implementation of the guidelines were welcomed by the General Assembly in resolution 66/42.

40. During the reporting period, several regional training courses for national authorities on effective ammunition management utilizing the guidelines were organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs through the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. They included a training course for Latin American countries held in Asunción from 24 to 28 March 2014 and a training course for East and South African countries in Nairobi from 14 to 17 April 2014, organized in collaboration with the Mine Action Service.

41. The Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean have integrated the guidelines into the training curricula, manuals and courses that they provide to security sector officials of national Governments to strengthen their capacity to control small arms and light weapons and translated them into standard operating procedures for use by States. For example, through the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has supported States in the implementation of the guidelines through in-country technical assessments of ammunition and weapon storage sites in Paraguay and Peru, using an online risk reduction checklist developed to assist experts in assessing ammunition stockpiles.³ The Office has also worked with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to build the capacity of the armed forces in ammunition stockpile management.

42. Training on the guidelines provided by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Mine Action Service and other partners in the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism has promoted national compliance with the guidelines, in particular in the area of stockpile management.

³ See www.un.org/disarmament/un-saferguard.

43. The Mine Action Service has been involved in the operationalization of the guidelines in partnership with police and military institutions in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Libya, Mali, Sierra Leone, Somalia and South Sudan, to promote the highest standards possible for the benefit of local populations.

44. During the reporting period, the Office for Disarmament Affairs launched the UN SaferGuard quick response mechanism, which allows ammunitions experts to be deployed rapidly to assist States, upon request, in the urgent management of ammunition stockpiles, including in the aftermath of unintended explosions of ammunition. Utilizing the quick response mechanism, the Office began collaborating with the World Customs Organization to support the efforts of the latter to secure dangerous goods seized by border officials.

45. During the reporting period, the Office for Disarmament Affairs organized the inaugural meeting of the UN SaferGuard Board, on 29 and 30 April 2014, to oversee the implementation of the guidelines, working closely with the Mine Action Service, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Activities undertaken by United Nations programmes and agencies

46. In 2013, members of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism have continued to provide support to countries in conflict and those with high levels of armed violence. Those efforts have ensured that support to small arms control goes hand in hand with measures aimed at addressing the underlying causes of violence. Such support has included strengthening institutional capacities to respond to crime and violence (police, justice, line ministries and local government) and tackle the challenge of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms. It has also focused on efforts to promote security at the community level and prevent conflict and violence through a particular focus on groups at risk.

47. The Police Division of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, together with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, launched a joint initiative on small arms and ammunition with the aim of building the capacity of the national police in Liberia, through UNMIL, to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Training based on the guidelines and the International Small Arms Control Standards was undertaken and a guide on the identification of weapons was developed for use by the United Nations and national law enforcement agencies and peacekeepers. A similar initiative is also being implemented in Mali.

48. In 2013, UNDP provided support for the control of small arms and light weapons and the reduction of armed violence in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan.

49. In Kenya, UNDP has supported the development of legislation on small arms and light weapons control. Furthermore, a community-level dialogue on the dangers of the illicit trade in small arms has contributed to the reduction of armed violence in targeted communities. In Nepal, further support was provided to roll out the national small arms strategy at district and community levels in 2014. UNDP has

also supported the Government of Nicaragua in its efforts to control small arms and light weapons, which has contributed to a significant reduction in homicides in the country (from 11 to 8.7 homicides per 100,000 persons).

50. The advisory and technical support of the Mine Action Service in weapons and ammunition destruction and storage has prevented their diversion to illicit markets, accidental explosions and their use in improvised explosive devices. During the reporting period, at the request of countries or as mandated by the Security Council, the Service destroyed surplus and unsecured weapons and ammunition in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia and South Sudan. In the case of the Central African Republic, the Service deployed its rapid response capacity, which identified and cleared 130 tons of unsecured conventional weapons and ammunition in five military camps in the middle of Bangui.

51. The Mine Action Service has also built or refurbished storage sites in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali and South Sudan. In South Sudan, through quick-impact projects involving the National Police Service and the Sudan People's Liberation Army, weapons and ammunition were secured in Juba, Wau and Yei.

52. Implementing innovative training programmes on the International Small Arms Control Standards, the international ammunition technical guidelines and their best practices, the Mine Action Service has engaged national authorities and their military and police forces in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Mali, Sierra Leone and Somalia. The armed forces in Mali were trained in the design criteria for safe storage. In Libya, the Service supported efforts by the Government to draft new legislation for firearms security and construct temporary ammunition storage facilities in line with the guidelines and the Standards.

53. The mandates of United Nations missions often include the design and implementation of programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and for the reform of the security sector in the host country. In this regard, with the joint support of UNDP and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, through the global focal points for police, justice, and corrections, the United Nations system has provided assistance to justice and security institutions so that they can effectively uphold the rule of law, and reduce and prevent the proliferation and use of illicit weapons.

Group of States Interested in Practical Disarmament Measures

54. The Group of States Interested in Practical Disarmament Measures is an informal, open and transparent forum to promote the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures. The Group has continued its efforts to support the implementation of the Programme of Action, including through information sharing on lessons learned from previous disarmament and peacebuilding projects (see General Assembly resolution 67/50, para. 4). In a follow-up to the second Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2012, the Group discussed how recent developments in small arms technology could contribute to the advancement of practical disarmament measures, as well as how relevant tools and technologies could be applied effectively to capacity-building projects in the conflict and post-conflict

context. The Group also continued to function as a mechanism for the effective matching of assistance needs with available resources in the field of small arms control assistance (see A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I, sect. II.D (h)).

B. Activities undertaken at the regional and subregional levels

Americas

55. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean provided assistance to States through over 50 activities concerning small arms throughout the region. That support has translated into the destruction of over 9,000 surplus, obsolete or confiscated small arms, along with almost four tons of ammunition for small arms and light weapons in total throughout the region and marked improvements in the management, safety and security of stockpiles. The Centre also trained over 400 security sector officials on a range of small arms control issues, including marking, stockpile management, destruction techniques and management of evidence related to crimes concerning small arms and light weapons.

56. The Centre has also assisted States in creating public policy dialogues on small arms control and in reforming and updating national legislation on small arms and light weapons vis-à-vis international instruments.

57. Women play a pivotal role in disarmament and arms control and, as such, the Centre conducted a training course for female security sector personnel in El Salvador in November 2013. In addition to strengthening their technical capacity in curbing the illicit traffic in small arms, the course also improved cooperation among the various law enforcement institutions responsible for enforcing small arms laws and regulations.

58. At the request of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the Mine Action Service trained the Haitian National Police in weapons management and control and initiated quick-impact projects to improve weapons security in the Presidential Security Unit and the Haitian National Police Academy.

Africa

59. The Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa provided technical assistance, capacity-building, research capacity and information to African Member States and regional organizations through more than 25 activities in 15 States.

60. The Centre provided training and capacity-building on small arms and light weapons control, stockpile management and destruction and the role of civil society in disarmament. In particular, the Centre supported the operations of national commissions on small arms and light weapons by providing assistance in drafting, reviewing and implementing national action plans for small arms and developing a manual of standard operating procedures for physical security and stockpile management, in line with the International Small Arms Control Standards and the international ammunition technical guidelines. The Centre further supported Member States through subregional workshops on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument and on the guidelines. In order to address the link between security sector reform activities and small arms control, the Centre trained

security sector officials on international standards governing the proportional use of firearms.

61. The Centre worked in close partnership with United Nations agencies, the African Union, subregional organizations and non-governmental organizations in promoting the signature and ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty and the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Asia and the Pacific

62. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific continued to support and contribute to national, regional and international discussions on combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

63. The Centre organized a national workshop to enhance the capacity of the relevant national authorities in Myanmar to implement the Programme of Action.

Other regions

64. With the financial assistance of the European Union, the South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons is implementing regional disarmament and arms control activities in South-Eastern Europe. All the activities that have been implemented are designed to contribute directly to capacity-building in the beneficiary States and territories in practical disarmament measures; provide practical and technical assistance to States/territories for curbing the illicit traffic and trade in small arms and light weapons; support efforts in collecting and destroying illicit and surplus small arms and light weapons; and help empower the relevant institutions and organizations of the region in carrying out coherent and coordinated efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

65. The countries of the western Balkans continue to receive assistance from the Clearinghouse for enhanced transparency and accountability in the area of arms exports control.

66. The countries of the western Balkans have demonstrated and are demonstrating their willingness and capability to report on their arms trade to national, regional and global mechanisms related to arms control through maintaining records of and control over all national export, import and transit licences; improving their national control systems; and introducing subregional control mechanisms based on coordination and information exchange.

III. Observations and conclusions

67. The resolve of the international community to address the perennial issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is unwavering. The measures that States have identified during the fifth biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action attest to the existing political will and determination at the international level to address this issue, which continues to wreak havoc across the globe and hamper efforts to promote socioeconomic development.

68. States are increasingly aware that new technologies could be useful in their ongoing efforts to address the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons and are committed to devising the appropriate strategies in this regard.

69. The imminent entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty augurs well for the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Once implemented, the Treaty will strengthen and complement the Programme of Action in the area of export assessment, preventing diversion and countering illicit arms brokering.

70. Coordination within the wider United Nations system is essential for continued support to national and regional efforts for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. Furthermore, it will also be important to ensure that relevant activities are properly resourced in a timely manner. Lessons learned from United Nations interventions in peacekeeping operations and special political missions demonstrate greater impact and cost-effectiveness when resources and priorities are incorporated early into planning processes. Lastly, further strengthening of partnerships with international and regional organizations and with civil society organizations will be critical in this endeavour.
